

*Report to the President*  
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29 October 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Review of SE-4, "Intelligence Implications of a Census and Verification of Armed Forces and Armaments," 12 May 1951

1. In connection with the current NSC policy review of the US position on disarmament, the Board of National Estimates has reviewed SE-4 and concludes that it is still generally valid. While a census and verification of armaments is not specifically included in the broad disarmament proposals now before the UNGA, we assume that some such procedure would be an integral part of any detailed disarmament program.

2. In this event the intelligence implications would still be generally the same as when SE-4 was prepared, with the following qualifications:

a. With respect to disclosure in the nuclear field (para. 3e of Discussion), we believe that the USSR would now stand to gain more than the US from inspection of "current stockpiles." Given the advances in the state of the nuclear art the key nuclear intelligence target, for both the US and USSR, is now primarily the nature of weapons stockpiled (as an indicator of plans for use and of the evolution of new production and delivery techniques). On the other hand, we continue to believe that the US would gain more intelligence than it would lose in an inspection system confined to the mining, processing, and production of fissionable materials (excluding any radical new developments), in view of the extent to which such information has already been made publicly available on the US program.\*

b. With respect to disclosure of non-nuclear research and development (para. 5d of Discussion), we believe that the USSR's greatest need is probably for data on our most sensitive and scientifically advanced projects. Since the USSR probably still lags somewhat behind the US in most of these fields (though less so than in 1951), it would gain more than the US from inspection of such projects. On the other hand, Soviet intelligence on less sensitive projects is probably good, largely because so much

\* The Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee concurs in this view.

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information appears in our open literature. Thus the US would gain from equal disclosure of these projects. For example, US intelligence is wholly inadequate in the guided missile field, where a major Soviet threat is believed to be developing, while Soviet intelligence has probably gained a great deal from US open literature.\*\* Under these circumstances equal disclosure of all but the sensitive aspects of missile research and development would greatly benefit the US.

3. Since the USSR "would attempt to exploit any system of census and verification to its advantage..." (Conclusion 5 of SE-4), to minimize this risk we re-emphasize our conclusion that "each phase and within it, each step in the inspection process, should be carried out simultaneously in the US and USSR" (Conclusion 5d of SE-4), and that there should be absolute reciprocity at each stage.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

SHERMAN KENT

\*\* As an example the current issue of American Aviation (25 October 1964) contains a surprisingly complete review of the US missile program, as compared with our extremely limited knowledge of the specific Soviet program as given in a recent national estimate, NIE 11-C-54.

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**SPECIAL ESTIMATE**

**SE -4, 12 May 1951**

**CONCLUSIONS**

1. We are convinced that the USSR would enter into any agreement of census and verification in bad faith and would carry it out in bad faith.
2. Since the USSR has far more information on the US than vice-versa, it is probable that a census and verification could be so devised that in the initial phases the US would secure more valuable information than would the Soviet Union. This would require that the USSR be prevented from securing in those initial phases information intended to be withheld until a later phase, or not to be disclosed at all.
3. Beyond the initial stages, phasing of such a census and verification will become increasingly difficult and there will be a correspondingly greater danger that the USSR would secure information of relatively greater value than would the US.
4. Adoption of the following principles in the phasing of census and verification would aid in protecting US interests:
  - a. In the earlier phases, only the least sensitive information should be released.
  - b. Sensitive aspects of research and development in all fields, manufacturing processes and details of new weapons (the measure of US technological superiority) should be excluded altogether.
  - c. The freedom of movement and access of inspection teams should in general be carefully limited to quantitative verification of numbers, types, sizes, etc., although within these limits inspection should be as full and free as possible. Detailed inspection of

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technical specifications, performance data, etc., should be avoided. Although this limitation on the freedom of inspection would reduce the amount of intelligence the US would acquire, it would be necessary in order to guard against exposure of the highly sensitive information excluded from the census and against premature disclosure in an earlier phase of information reserved for a later phase.

d. Each phase, and within it each step in the inspection process, should be carried out simultaneously in the US and USSR.

5. It is certain that the USSR would attempt to exploit any system of census and verification to its advantage and there is grave danger that the USSR might succeed in so exploiting it. Although a system based on the principles enumerated in 4 above would in the initial phases theoretically secure for the US more information on the USSR than vice-versa, and aid in protecting the technological superiority of the US, we believe that these results would be extremely difficult to achieve in practice. It would be particularly difficult to implement the system in detail in such a way as to prevent the USSR from securing in an earlier phase information which was to be withheld until a later phase, or not disclosed at all. An analysis of these difficulties, as well as the possibilities of surmounting them, will require careful and extensive study by operating as well as intelligence agencies of this government.